

The Hawaii Aging Network Agenda for the Decade

The mission of the Executive Office on Aging is to promote dignity and independence of older adults, and to help prepare for the rapid expansion of Hawaii's aging population.

The Hawaii Aging Network has served the 60+ population for nearly four decades in partnerships with the public and private sectors. Older adults themselves contribute to our aging society -- as advisors, volunteers, and consumers of aging services.

The EOA:

- advocates policies, develops resources, and initiates programs that benefit older adults;
- administers and mobilizes resources to serve older adults with greatest social and economic needs and who are not dependent on Medicaid or other welfare programs; and
- implements the four-year State Plan on Aging that identifies needs, resources, and strategies to meet the needs of older adults statewide.

The EOA and Area Agencies on Aging, in partnership with senior organizations, are developing strategies to:

- assure broad public input to Congressional reauthorization of the Older Americans Act that funds aging services statewide;
- assure Hawaii's representation at the October 2005 White House Conference on Aging, mandated by the Older Americans Act to be conducted every ten years; and
- support Kokua Council for Senior Citizens in planning and conducting the model senior citizens legislature at the State Capitol in December 2005.

Planners, policy makers, and researchers require reliable and valid data about Hawaii's population. The EOA and UH Center on The Family are seeking resources to screen, centralize and make available diverse data and databases about Hawaii's older adults and caregivers. The availability of improved data would enhance sound allocation of limited resources and long range planning for Hawaii's long term care needs. For information, contact Pat Sasaki, (808) 586-0100 or Sylvia Yuen, (808) 956-4132.

Can communities design carefully guided remedies that will prevent or reduce the need for costly institutional care? A partnership among the EOA, Area Agencies on Aging, Department of Health, and community agencies has launched the Healthy Aging Project. This long-term endeavor will help communities design evidence-based research projects that test methods that will help older adults who are unable or reluctant to benefit from existing health programs. Increased physical activity and improved diets have proven effective in reducing certain injuries and diseases and having a major impact on long-term care needs and costs. For information, contact Shirley Kidani, (808) 586-0100.

Older adults and caregivers who seek independence -- and thus reduce the demands on welfare assistance that is costly for the State -- deserve quality home and community-based services. The EOA will establish Kupuna Care as a system of services for older adults and caregivers who are in greatest need of support and who are not dependent upon Medicaid support. Aligning administration of State with federal services will advance procurement, management, and coordinated delivery of services by the County/Agencies on Aging. For information, contact Pat Sasaki or Elvira Lee, (808) 586-0100.

Beneficiaries who cannot easily comprehend Medicare information are unable to seek benefits nor determine that they may be victims of Medicare fraud. The EOA is seeking federal grant resources to simplify Medicare information for adults with limited proficiencies in the English language. The grant project will design, test, and disseminate best practices and tools to statewide agencies who provide bilingual and interpretive assistance to older adults and caregivers. EOA will partner with Maui County Office on Aging, Alu Like Inc., Maui Economic Opportunity Inc., and Maui Community College Media Center to pilot the program in Maui County because of its older adult, income, and ethnic minority demographics. The testing and evaluation activities will focus on Filipino,

Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic older adults and caregivers in Maui County. For information, contact Pat Sasaki, (808) 586-0100.

Hawaii's citizens have long sought a centralized resource for long term care planning and resource and information. In partnership with the City and County of Honolulu Elderly Affairs Division (EAD), the EOA is gathering information and assessing sustainable partnerships for this effort. The EOA will seek resources to develop a model one-stop center in Honolulu that will serve older adults, caregivers, and persons with physical disabilities, regardless of income. The EOA and Honolulu and EAD are seeking an accessible and suitable site and firm agreements to collocate resources and staffing on a sustainable basis. For information, contact Pat Sasaki, (808) 586-0100 or Karen Miyake, (808) 523-4361.